



Tanana City School District

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Thérèse Ashton, Superintendent/Principal

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a principal/superintendent for a small remote rural district that serves a Native Alaskan population. We have wonderful students who have great potential to become positive contributors to our country. For this reason I write to provide Comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. E-Rate has been of great importance to Tanana City School District because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, to communicate and collaborate, and to develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. We are in a remote site and it is critical for us to receive E-Rate in order to provide our students with the internet. E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with my district's current and future bandwidth needs. Raising the E-rate funding level to at least \$5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years is the only way to come close to providing the funding needed for all students to have access equity.

As a superintendent in Alaska, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the school curriculum is a pre-requisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. To raise students to contribute successfully in society means they need to seamlessly integrate the appropriate use of technology into their work lives as well as their private lives. Access to high speed broadband is the key not only for modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country but is a matter of equity.

In my district we use digital learning to (personalize learning, provide online classes, meet common core state standards, administer online assessments, make data driven decisions etc.). This year we are using AKLN (Alaska's Learning Network) to provide our students choices in subject matter and alternative options for courses. Without adding bandwidth this option may not be realistic. Without this option our students will be limited in what can be provided on site.

Our district network is currently just keeping up with demand, and the need for a high speed reliable network is only going to increase in the very near future. Teachers have been fearful of fully using the outstanding resources outside of our remote village because we may put funds into an option that cannot be sustained without adequate funding for E-Rate.

The E-rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing Internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle applications from schools and libraries totaled more than \$5 billion, more than double the available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least \$5 billion to meet this demand. All students need access to high speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.

There are many reasons why the needs of a small remote district in Alaska may be disregarded in the grand scheme of things but we have students living in their own village and getting a public education. Shouldn't this education be on par with any other student? Shouldn't all students throughout the U.S. be provided a 21st Century education that better prepares them for a future we can't even envision? I think so and hope you do as well.

Sincerely,



Therese Ashton
Superintendent/Principal